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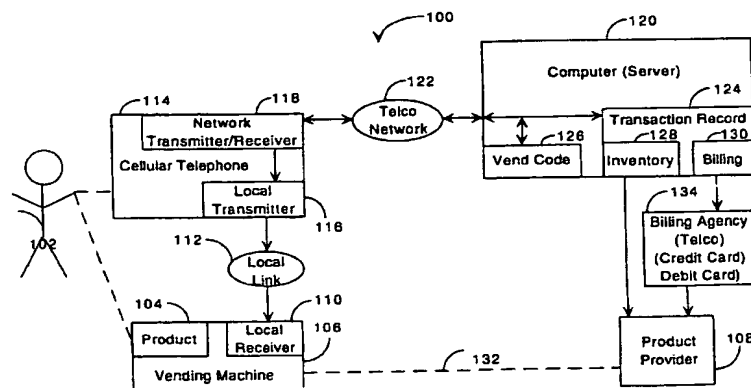
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(54) Title: VENDING MACHINE PURCHASE VIA CELLULAR TELEPHONE



(57) Abstract: There is disclosed a system and method for purchasing a product from an automatic vending machine by means of a consumer's cellular telephone. The consumer requests the purchase of a product available from the vending machine by dialing a specified telephone number which connects the consumer's cellular telephone to a server operated by a billing agency. The billing agency may include the provider of the product, the telephone company that provides the cellular telephone service, a credit card company, or a bank that has issued a debit card. The server recognizes the request for the purchase of the product as either the request for credit at the vending machine or the request for a particular product, creates a transaction record, and communicates a vend code to the consumer. The transaction record includes a billing record that the billing agency uses to bill the consumer for the requested product and an inventory record that the product provider uses in connection with restocking the vending machine. Upon receiving the vend code from the server, the consumer transmits the vend code to the vending machine. The vend code may be an RF code, an audible tone code, or a manual code. Upon receipt of the vend code from the consumer, the vending machine either establishes credit for the purchase of a product in the inventory of the vending machine or directly dispenses the requested product upon receipt of the vend code.

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